[49]

CHAPTER 5

MARRIAGE

582 Lolo society offers no exception to the fact that the starting point of the family organization is the union of the male and female in marriage. Their social tradition gives rise to certain marriage regulations which govern the formation of kin groups as well as the relationship between men and woman in society. Some of the more important regulations are described below.

582 564 First, since the class system is strictly observed in the Lolo community, there is absolutely no intermarriage between the black and white Lolo. In other words, they practice class endogamy. Black Lolo males can only have females of the same class; similarly, white Lolo slaves who belong to another class have to choose mates from among members of their own class. The social regulation as such is very 836 694 rigid, though natural instincts among the sexes may lead to illicit love affairs on certain fortuitous occasions without due 564 regard to the regulation. Such offenses are heavily punished. Thus, when a black Lolo female has unlawful relations with a white Lolo male, both are put to death. The man is forced to commit suicide by leaping into a river or from a rock; the woman takes poison or hangs herself. Within the Liang Shan community, this punishment is enforced very strictly [though there are exceptions like the following]. In 1928, after Yang 836 564 T'u-szu of Lei-po had passed away, his wife, the daughter of An T'u-szu of Sha-ma, who was then a beautiful and romantic woman of twenty, cohabited with her house manager, a 626 white Lolo named Yang Shou-hsüan. Therefore she was de- 558 spised by the Lolo, and according to Lolo tradition, both sides should be put to death. Nothing happened, however, because there was no t'u-szu in the district to enforce the penalty. Nevertheless, An T'u-szu of Sha-ma disowned her as his daughter, while the black and white Lolo in her household, no longer considering her as the mistress, all deserted her. Fortunately, the daughter of Yang T'u-szu, named Tai-ti, who is now twenty-two and knows a little about worldly affairs, has been able to restore somewhat the family fortune and prestige which have greatly deteriorated.

[180 cont,]

583 off his fiancée, but he must later pay a double dowry.

595 The "Lolo" generally have only a single wife.

684 Adultery is punished by death.

764 The dead "Lolo" is dressed in his finest clothes and then immediately afterwards placed on his bier. The coffin is kept for three days in the house in which the death took place. The burial is done the fourth day. Only the relatives take part in this ceremony. A fire is lighted on the grave as soon as the trench is [181] filled in. This fire is cared for by the relatives for nine days, if the deceased is a man, eight days for a woman, six days for a child. The grave then is abandoned and no one pays any further attention to it.

184 764 Some "Lolo" tribes follow slightly different customs. Among the "K'an-t'éou-lolo" ("Lolo" head-cutters), the corpses are dug up at the end of three years. The head is removed from the body and placed in a little wooden chest, which is placed in full view on a neighboring rock. (Photo 348, Plate 44, shows rocks which the inhabitants of the region call "rocks of the tombs," on which are still found heads of "K'an-t'éou-lolo" coming from a hamlet of this tribe which moved away thirty years before.) (Southwest of Pha-Long.)

Other tribes bury their dead without coffins and place upon the corpse a long, hollow, vertical piece of bamboo which sticks out on top of the mound. The relatives from time to time verify the state of decomposition of the corpse, by coming and smelling the emanations at the upper end of the bamboo. When there is no further odor, the corpse is dug up, and the bones are placed in a small chest, which is exposed as has been described above for the "K'an-t'éou."

771 177 The "Lolo" of Tonkin, properly speaking, have neither religion nor peculiar beliefs. They have adopted those of their nearest neighbors, either "Méo," "Man," or "Thai." They believe in the evil spirits but do not fear them to the same extent as do the "Thai."

769 778 They observe ancestral worship strictly enough. On the ancestral altar the dead are represented in the following manner: branches of orchids, cut to a length of seven knots for a man and